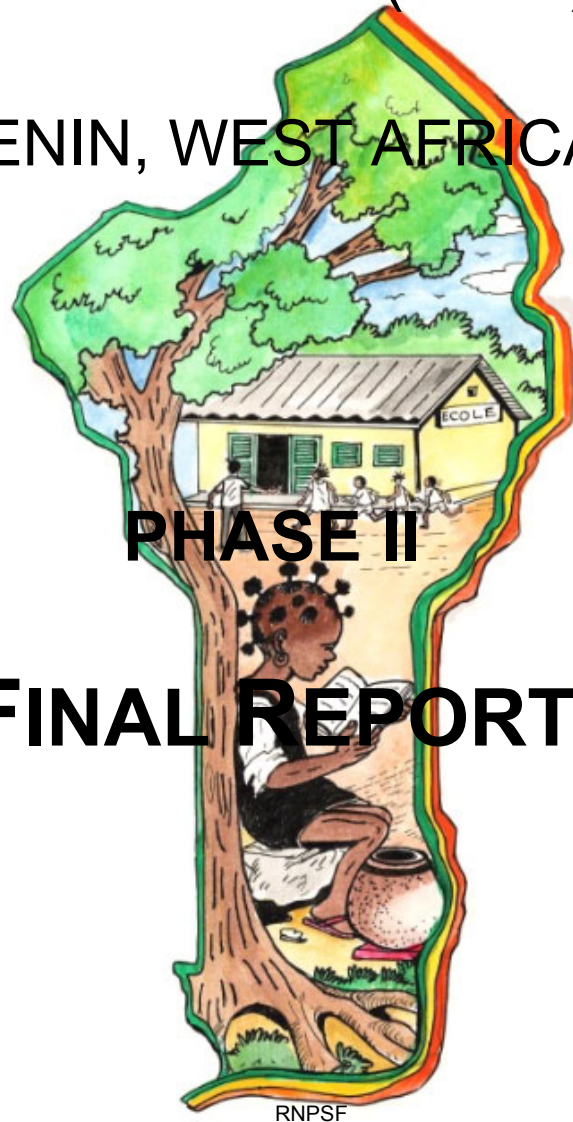


CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND EQUITY FOUNDATIONS (CLEF) PROJECT

BENIN, WEST AFRICA



RNPSF

THE MITCHELL GROUP, INC.



November 15, 2001
Washington, D.C.

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



USAID/BENIN

**CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND EQUITY
FOUNDATIONS (CLEF II) PROJECT
BENIN, WEST AFRICA**

Contract No. 624-C-00-98-00013-00

FINAL REPORT

Technical Assistance Project to the Reform Program
for Basic Education in Benin

Submitted by:

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Preface

This report is specifically focused on what has been designated as *Phase II or CLEF II* of the Children's Learning and Equity Foundations (CLEF) Program and Project of Benin, West Africa, during the contractual period of August 1, 1998 through July 31, 2001 as well as an extension for the Pedagogical sector, from August 1 until October 31, 2001. This time-period constitutes the second and final phase of the CLEF Project. The same principal contractor, The Mitchell Group, Incorporated (TMG), managed both phases, extending from August 16, 1995 through October 31, 2001.

TMG's subcontractors for *CLEF II* were the Academy for Educational Development (AED) and Creative Associates International, Incorporated (CAII).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The last decade of the twentieth century found the educational system in the Republic of Benin in dire straits. Due to previously failed reform attempts, Beninese schools could barely be characterized as schools. These buildings, scattered throughout the country, were better known for their crumbling walls, snake infestations, lack of appropriate toilet facilities, polluted water sources, unsafe terrains and leaky roofs. Within these institutions were unmotivated and poorly trained teachers who lacked proper curricula, textbooks, desks, blackboards, and even chalk.

The education system's weak management only served to exacerbate the infrastructure problem. A highly centralized system, with poorly distributed responsibilities to equally poorly trained and unmotivated administrators, made even the least minor managerial decision a nightmare. Yet, by 2001, a transformation was achieved...specifically in the primary education sector. This transformation was initiated and effected by the United States Government and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in collaboration with the Government of Benin (GOB), starting in 1991 with the Children's Learning and Equity Foundations (CLEF) Program and Project.

A complete overhaul of the primary learning evaluation system took place, stressing skills rather than rote memory. New curricula for all primary school subjects were developed and tested, and were implemented or *generalized* throughout the primary education system. New and innovative teaching methodologies, for the child and his/her environment, were introduced. A total restructuring of the Primary Leaving Exam (CEP) occurred. These changes resulted in a CEP success rate of over 90% for school year

1999-2000. Approximately 21,500 teachers and 100 school inspectors were trained in the use of the new curricula and its teaching methodologies. Textbooks, workbooks, teacher guides (including assesment guides), modules, and pedagogical charts were developed, tested and printed locally for Grades 1-4. Three defunct Teacher Training Colleges were reorganized and reopened, in addition to a complete physical renovation of one of these, located at Natitingou. An accelerated language training program was instituted in addition to a revolutionary language training methodology.

Strong emphasis was placed on girls' education. As a result, a National Girls' Education Network (Réseau nationale pour la promotion de la scolarisation des filles) was established with the primary objective of *increasing equity for girls and children in disadvantaged regions*, thus obtaining a sustainable increase in the gross enrollment rate for girls. To facilitate the success of this initiative, a Monitoring and Evaluation System was installed to measure the impact of girls' education on interventions on enrollment, retention, and promotion rates of girls. Other activities included: the financing of grassroots organizations for the implementation of activities that support girls' education; training workshops to enhance skills that improve equity in the classroom; the production of a video on girls' education, *School, A Right for Her Also!* that is used for community involvement and fund raising. These trailblazing initiatives were deemed directly responsible for a 16.65% increase (cf. Annex A) in Benin's gross enrollment rate for girls since 1995.

Effective management skills at the central and regional levels are key elements in the functioning of an effective primary education system. Many of the major issues limiting past efforts to improve the primary education system in Benin were due to a lack of such

skills. CLEF Project's Financial Management and Educational Planning teams worked diligently with the GOB/ Ministry of Finance (MOF) and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MEPS) in assessing areas of institutional weaknesses and developing systematic programs to correct them.

More specifically, the Financial Management team established a fully operational expenditure tracking system at both the central and regional levels of the MOE in addition to training the staff in its usage. The team also developed a budgetary procedures manual, step-by-step guides and techniques for financial managers, and trained the financial managers in their usage. They trained MOE staff, in-country and abroad, to develop local capacity in Financial and Administrative Management; trained 57 financial managers in the new accounting system used throughout West Africa (SYSCOA); and, trained staff of NGOs involved in girls' education. The team also devised various planning tools for forecasting trends on which managers can base their decisions. A study on private schools was produced as well to assist the GOB in its reform of the national school system.

The CLEF Project's Educational Planning team was intimately involved with the establishment of Fundamental Quality Level (FQL) standards for the reform of Benin's primary education system. These FQL standards are norms that were established to ensure the Beninese child of obtaining a quality education. Ten such norms are now in place for all aspects of Benin's primary education system. In addition, a comprehensive study on the impact of decentralization on the human resources and financial needs in Benin's education system was completed and a national forum held on the subject in May 2001. The study sought to promote greater and more sustainable stakeholders'

participation in Benin's primary education reform. It also aimed to identify related MEPS decentralization initiatives and to support their effective implementation. Lastly, the team created a fully functional Education Management Information System (EMIS) based on graphic interface that was decentralized to all six Regional Directorates of Education (DDE) Departments.

What produced such a transformation in Benin's education system? This change occurred as a result of the political will and determination of the GOB. Assisted by USAID and the CLEF Program and Project contractors and subcontractors, the GOB renewed its commitment to quality education for the children of Benin. It planned and implemented a major reform effort that touched every area of the primary education system. This reform effort has signalled new hope to the average Beninese.

The Mitchell Group, Inc.
Children's Learning and Equity Foundations (CLEF)
Project (Benin)
USAID Contract Number 624-C-00-98-00013-00

1.0 Introduction and Background

The Republic of Benin, though its image was somewhat tarnished during the last national election, remains a vibrant democratic state continuing on the path of free-market economic reform. The elections of March 1996 and March 2001 re-affirmed Benin's commitment to democracy. In free elections, the former President, Mathieu Kerekou, replaced his successor, Nicephore Soghlo, in 1996 and then was re-elected for a final 5-year mandate in 2001. Benin, reputed as a model of peaceful democratic transition in Africa, continues the liberal economic policies put in place by the first democratic government led by Nicephore Soghlo in 1991.

The watershed for Benin's transformation to democracy occurred in 1991. After a series of national conferences, (*La conférence nationale des forces vives et les Etats Généraux pour l'Education* – Feb. and Oct. 1990, respectively) a democratic constitutional government led by Nicephore Soghlo was put into place after 17 years of Marxist-Leninist rule. Among other reforms, the new government emphasized the restructure of its educational system. In January 1991, the newly formed liberal democracy approved an Education Policy Framework Document containing its statement on planned educational reform.

2.0 Children's Learning and Equity Foundations (CLEF) Project

The United States Government, acting through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), wanted to assist the GOB in the reform of its educational system and entered into two agreements on September 30, 1991. These agreements (one for *Program # 680-0206* and one for *Project # 680-0208*) culminated in the *Children's Learning and Equity Foundations (CLEF) Project*.

2.1 Goal and Purpose

The overall goal to which the CLEF project contributed was *to improve the human resource base of Benin*. The United States Government believes that in order to achieve broad-based, sustainable economic growth, a nation requires an educated human resource base with a capacity to respond to changing skill needs. To facilitate this objective, citizens have a right to basic literacy and numeracy. A good education system becomes the mechanism by which people may realize their own potential. To the extent that they are able to do so, the society benefits as a whole. Therefore, the project's overall goal was *to set in place a system for human resource development, which would allow the Beninois to realize their full human potential*.

The specific objective of the CLEF Project, as outlined in the initial Program Assistance Authorization Document (PAAD), was *to institute an effective, efficient, and equitable primary education system that would be sustainable by the year 2002*. In this instance, *effectiveness* would pertain to educational quality. In particular, the development of cognitive skills and educational competencies that were dependant upon the quality, quantity, and mix of educational *inputs* (e.g., teachers, textbooks and materials, the curriculum) would prove critical. *Efficiency* would focus on the utilization and costs of

these inputs on order to achieve optimum educational outcomes at the lowest possible cost. Efficiency also involved student flow parameters, such as repetition rates, dropout rates, and the total years invested per cycle completer. Efficiency was further influenced by increases in quality of service delivery to the extent that quality improvements decrease the time required to achieve a desired output. *Equity* referred to the distribution of inputs and outputs to girls and boys in every region of the country. *Sustainability* was concerned with the level of budgeted financial resources required to maintain the reforms and guarantee continued progress in increasing access to quality educational services, in addition to the transformation of the political and institutional systems and processes necessary to assure continued progress towards effectiveness, efficiency, and equity.

While this specific objective essentially drove the CLEF Project since its inception, the specific objective itself was revised in PAAD Amendment #4 in order to be more focused. The revision stated: [To] *assist the government of Benin (GOB) to re-establish Benin's primary education system improving quality and broadening access while promoting sustainability.*

The CLEF project achieved this objective by establishing a set of policy and project reforms in four main areas :

- (a) Systems and materials related to improving primary education effectiveness and internal efficiency (Learning and Instruction or Pedagogy);
- (b) Equity of access to quality educational services (Girls' Education);
- (c) Sustainable financing (Financial Management); and,
- (d) Institutions and local involvement necessary for effective, accountable, and transparent planning and management (Educational Planning).

2.2 CLEF I (August 16, 1995 – July 31, 1998) : An Overview

The CLEF project constituted part of a long-term primary education development program instituted in Benin in 1991. The USAID Mission, in anticipation of a requirement for an increased level of technical involvement in support of the Government of Benin's primary education reforms, entered into a contract with The Mitchell Group, Inc. (TMG), and its subcontractor at that time, Creative Associates International, Inc. (CAII), on August 16, 1995. The initial contract period involved two years, August 16, 1995 – August 15, 1997, and included an option to renew for one additional year, August 16, 1997 – August 15, 1998. Under USAID contract number 624-0208-C-00-5005-00, TMG agreed to provide technical services in support of the Benin CLEF Project and assume responsibility for five program areas : Learning and Instruction (Pedagogy); Financial Planning; Educational Planning; Management Information System (MIS); and Training.

CLEF I constituted the *experimental* or *pilot phase* of the CLEF project. In other words, new methodologies or curriculum inputs as well as ideologies, etc., would be set up and tested. Those that did not work would be revised or abandoned. Those that did work would be later implemented to full scale. In the experimental phase, TMG was required to provide certain contractual outputs that would help realize the overall objective of *assisting the government of Benin to re-establish Benin's primary education system by improving quality and broadening access while promoting sustainability*. TMG's strategy employed a *gradualist approach* that was *results oriented*. This was particularly noticeable in the area of Pedagogy. For example, implementation of the new programs first began in 30 experimental schools. This method was used as a *laboratory* setting. It helped the team determine what would or would not work, thereby allowing the team to

overcome possible constraints. After necessary modifications the team began generalizations of the new programs within the remaining schools.

TMG blended a strong management structure with a solid technical framework in order to facilitate the management and technical requirements of their contract. As a result, at the close of CLEF I, all contractual outputs were realized.

As previously stated, TMG was to assume responsibility for five program areas within the CLEF I contract. These were Learning and Instruction (Pedagogy), Financial Management, Educational Planning, Management Information System (MIS), and Training. Overall, training was an important element throughout CLEF I. Within each area of responsibility, the respective program area teams carried out specific training related to their expertise.

The specific accomplishments by CLEF I in each area of contractual responsibility are as follows :

Learning and Instruction (Pedagogy) :

- New curricula for all subjects developed and tested.
- New teaching methods introduced for the child and his/her environment.
- Implementation of the *Réponse active non-verbal (RANV)* or *Language in Action* methodology.
- Accelerated language training and reading program.
- New learning evaluation methods introduced, emphasizing skills rather than rote knowledge introduced.
- Testing instruments developed and tested in conformity with the new system.
- New curriculum developed and tested for the Primary School Leaving Exam (CEP).
- Validation of a national policy for textbook production.

- Method/Plan developed for the generalization of the new curriculum and in-service training of teachers and education staff.
- Reorganization and reopening of the Teacher Training Colleges.
- Over 3,338 teachers trained (713 at the regional level) in the new curriculum, and provided with an in-service refresher course.
- Profile of a modern school inspector developed, as well as, a revision of the training program as related to the new curriculum and development of training modules.
- Strategies instituted for training at a regional level, in all educational units.
- Sensitization of senior education staff on equity in the classroom.

Financial Management :

- New budget nomenclature developed for the Ministry of Education (MOE).
- Fully operational expenditure tracking system developed at both the central and regional levels of the MOE.
- Budgetary procedures manuals developed.
- Regional and central level staff trained in budget and expenditures tracking system.
- Annual evaluations of new budgetary procedures.

Educational Planning and Management Information System (MIS) :

In CLEF I the Educational Planning and MIS teams worked in synergy, although the MIS specialist was re-assigned to Girls' Education early in the project. The accomplishments of these two teams are as follows :

- Fundamental Quality Level (FQL) indicators related to fundamental inputs to ensure an adequate primary education system, developed for all aspects of the primary education system.
- Annual FQL implementation plans developed.
- Private school system diagnostic carried out.
- The first Management Information System developed for the MOE.
- Production of statistical data for the school year 1997-98 by the MOE.
- Creation for the first data information centers for the MOE (Porto Novo and Parakou).

- Production of the *Manuel de procédures pour la gestion de ressources humaines* (vols. 1 & 2) providing standardized operational procedures for Human Resource Management.
- Production of a plan for comprehensive decentralization of administrative procedures for the MOE.
- A survey and study completed on factors affecting enrollment : *Etude sur les facteurs affectant la demande sociale de l'éducation, (1996).*
- Development of an access to education policy document : *Document de politique d'accès et d'égalité, (1996).*
- Establishment of a National Girls' Education Network (*Réseau national pour la promotion de la scolarisation de filles*).
- A study conducted on factors affecting Girls' Education : *Etude sur l'impact de l'exonération des filles de zones rurales des frais d'écolage, (1996).*

2.3 CLEF II (August 1, 1998 – July 31, 2001) and Pedagogical Extension (August 1 – October 31, 2001)

TMG and its subcontractors signed a second contract (# 624-C-0098-00013-00) with USAID on June 16, 1998. With an effective date of August 1, 1998 through July 31, 2001, it ushered in the *implementation phase* or what is referred to as *CLEF II* of the project. In this phase, those new curriculum inputs that were tested and worked would be implemented or brought *to scale*. Generalization would then occur throughout the entire primary school system. Due to the enormity of this endeavor, an extension for the Pedagogical component was granted from USAID effective August 1, 2001 through October 31, 2001.

The contract began with an initial budget of \$8,199,051. Total budget expenditure at the close of the CLEF II was \$11,169,442 as new requirements were added during implementation.

2.3.1 Goal and Design

CLEF II retained the same specific objective as in CLEF I. TMG was to *assist the government of Benin (GOB) to re-establish Benin's primary education system improving quality and broadening access while promoting sustainability.*

TMG also employed the same approach for introducing change used in CLEF I. This involved experimenting with the change on a small scale in experimental or demonstration settings and then, once the problems of introducing the changes were understood and solutions worked out, of introducing the changes in a larger number of settings. This *gradualist approach*, based on experimenting in smaller *laboratory* settings in order to learn from them, allowed for the development of methods for dealing with and minimizing the amount and degree of resistance imposed against the introduction of the various changes. As a result TMG was able to institute changes that had high probabilities of effectiveness and sustainability.

2.3.2 Project Activity : The Contract line item numbers (CLINS)

TMG's second contract with USAID stipulated that it was to be responsible for nine program areas or *contract line item numbers (CLINS)*. It was within these areas of responsibility that *activities* would occur to ensure the overall objective of the project.

These nine areas of responsibility or CLINS were as follows :

1. Improve Primary Education Quality and Effectiveness.
2. Primary School Teaching Force Increased Improved and Motivated.
3. Broaden Access for Girls and Children from Disadvantaged Regions.
4. Promote Girl Schooling Through a National Network.
5. Adequate Financial Resources Available for Rehabilitation and Maintenance.
6. Participative Decision –Making and Consensus building.
7. MEPS Institutional Capacity Strengthened to Carry-out GOB's Objective.

8. Training.
9. Equipment and Capital Development.

On December 15, 2000, contract modification number six (6) was signed by TMG and USAID. The purpose of the modification was to (1) combine CLINS, thereby reducing the number of CLINS from nine to four, (2) authorize up to 15% flexibility between CLIN amounts, (3) revise the key personnel provision to reflect current approved key personnel, and (4) incorporate a revised milestone chart into the contract (cf. Annex B). The modified CLINS were:

1. Improve quality effectiveness of primary schools - Learning and Instruction (Pedagogy).
2. Increased equity for girls and children in disadvantaged regions – Girls’ Education
3. Adequate financial resources available for rehabilitation and maintenance of education system – Financial Management
4. Greater participation promoted through participatory decision-making and consensus building – Educational Planning

2.3.3 Key Personnel

Key personnel were considered essential to the work being performed via the CLEF project. At the beginning of CLEF II key personnel were the following :

James R. Dean Chief of Party
 Adama Traore Financial Management Expert
 James Toliver Educational Policy and Planning Expert
 Dr. Daniele Schaeffer – Campbell .. Learning and Instruction Advisor (Pedagogy)
 Francine M. Agueh Girls’ Education and Equity Advisor

A number of changes in project personnel were effected when various administrative constraints developed.

At the close of CLEF II key personnel were the following :

Dr. Paul Hebert Chief of Party
 Salif Camara Financial Management Advisor
 James Toliver (8/98 – 12/00) Educational Policy and Planning Advisor

Dr. Daniele Schaeffer-Campbell ...Learning and Instruction Advisor (Pedagogy)

Lea Gaba Afouda Girls' Education and Equity Advisor

TMG received technical support and assistance from a cadre of noted international consultants as well as host-country nationals. This cadre included Drs. Denis Chabot and Léo Laroche, curriculum and student assessment specialists, respectively; Drs. Lisette Gagnon-Noron and Piere Chamberland, French textbook specialists; Dr. Conrad Huard, a Mathematics textbook specialist and Dr. Luc Gilbert, a decentralization specialist. These consultants were from Quebec, Canada. Dr. Joan Fiator, an educational project design specialist was from the USA. The following consultants were from Benin: Ms. Agniola Badarou; Ms. Rebecca Dossou-Gbete; Dr. Lydia Pognon; and, Dr. Christophe Oku.

2.4 Specific Accomplishments

The CLEF II team accomplished 100 % of its requirements despite significant hurdles. The CLEF II efforts are detailed below by CLIN, followed by highlighted areas and a listing of specific accomplishments.

2.4.1 CLIN 1 : Learning and Instruction (Pedagogy)

Pedagogy is the *cog* on which the CLEF project revolves. In CLEF I, the experimental phase, new curricula for all subjects were developed and tested, and new teaching methodologies for the child and his/her environment were introduced. Teachers were trained in the new curricula and given refresher courses on its utilization, as well as its new teaching methodologies. New learning evaluation methods, emphasizing skills rather than rote memory were also introduced. The student evaluation system and the Primary Leaving School Exam (CEP) were completely revised. In addition, the Pedagogy team conceptualized, produced and tested locally developed textbooks, teacher

guides and workbooks, for the first time in Beninese history. CLEF II represented the *implementation phase* or *generalization* of all of these new curricula. These new study programs were officially launched on October 11, 1999, by Benin's Head of State, in all of the country's public and private primary schools. This successful inauguration was the result of the intense efforts and training provided by the CLEF pedagogical team, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and USAID, Basic Education Team (BET). Of the CLEF pedagogical team's numerous and outstanding accomplishments, two are to be highlighted: the training of teachers, directors and school inspectors and the expansion of the development, production and testing of textbooks.

Training of Teachers, Directors and School Inspectors

One of the greatest challenges faced by the pedagogical team was how to prepare the teachers to teach the new curricula and utilize the new teaching methodologies. By using *Side Based Training*, a four-phased approach, the team was able to train over 21,500 CI/CP/CE1 (Grades 1, 2 and 3) teachers and 100 school inspectors over a two-year span.

The first phase of training was conducted at the national level specifically for coordinators. These coordinators represented a stationary group composed of experts who were directly involved in curriculum development, textbook design, and student assessment and teacher training, in addition to Pilots and members of the CLEF pedagogical staff. Teacher modules were produced and plans were developed on the training of teachers.

Phase two involved the training of trainers, those persons who would actually train the teachers, in six national departments. They were trained by the coordinators. The

coordinators, being directly involved in curriculum development, had first-hand knowledge of the goals, objectives, and methodologies to be imparted to the teachers.

The third phase was the actual training of teachers. This was done at the regional level in areas selected near their schools, which resulted in high attendance. This phase fully prepared 21,500 teachers and 100 school inspectors for the generalization of the new CI/CP/CE1 programs. In the fourth and final follow-up phase, a poll was conducted to ascertain parent satisfaction with the new CI/CP programs; CLEF II's efforts received an approval rate of over 90%. CE1's follow-up was not conducted under this contract.

The training was *curriculum specific*. In other words, it was designed specifically to teach the new curriculum and teaching methods to all the educational staff in each grade level. Thus, the training enabled teaching that was appropriate to a *child-centered* approach and utilized various aspects of the environment as learning resources.

Primary School Textbooks Locally Produced

Textbook production by the pedagogical team began in the *experimental phase* or *CLEF I*. The textbooks were developed, produced, and tested first in 30 designated experimental schools. This proved to be an enormous endeavor. However, convening a team of local experts, including editors and printers, the team was able to locally conceptualize, produce and test textbooks, teacher guides and workbooks for the first time in Beninese history using a 21-step process:

1. Curriculum development
2. Planning of the structure and contents of textbooks, teachers' guides and workbooks
3. Preparation of the first draft of manuscripts for textbooks, teacher's guides and workbooks

4. Word processing
5. Sample experimentation in classrooms
6. Proofing by the textbooks, teachers' guides and workbook writers
7. Typing of corrections
8. Submission of first draft to international consultants (noted pedagogical experts)
9. Submission of comments and recommendations from international consultants to writers for perusal, comments and/or corrections
10. Request for services of illustrators
11. Drawing of illustrations
12. Submission of draft to reading committee and to the editors
13. Harmonization meeting between reading committee, editors, writers and pilot overseeing the textbooks' action plan and the CLIN 1 team.
14. The issuing of corrections and/or comments by writers following harmonization meeting
15. Typing of corrections and the laying out of pages for the various documents
16. Final review of documents by the writers and the CLIN 1 team.
17. Printing and digitilization of final copy for the printing companies
18. Production of first printouts by printing companies
19. Review of printouts by CLIN I team, pilot and printing staff and adjustments made
20. Authorization of final printing
21. Production of final prints of textbooks and teachers' guides

CLEF II expanded on the efforts of CLEF I by generalizing the new textbooks to all of the remaining schools. Beginning in the 1998-99 school year, textbooks, pupil workbooks, teachers' guides (including student assessment guides) and pedagogical charts were prepared and distributed for Grade 1. These efforts were later expanded to include Grades 2, 3, and 4. All these materials were printed in Benin. These were developed by Beninese authors involved in the process of school reform, under the supervision of the pedagogical team. The materials were based on the new curricula and reflected the culture of Benin and were *reality-based*. In other words, the materials were

based on and illustrated some of the realities of a Benin school child's life. They were gender sensitive, designed to work best in a *child-centered* and *learning-materials-rich* approach to learning - the very approach that CLEF I and II postulated.

List of Accomplishments

The accomplishments made by the Learning and Instruction team (Pedagogy), in CLEF II, are listed as follows:

Curricula and Pedagogical Aids:

- Implementation of a new, three-phased classroom methodology or *practical hands-on technique* for all fields of training : *Introduction, Realization ; Return and Projection*.
- Implementation of *Individual, Team, Collective and Cooperative learning* techniques.
- Periodic testing of students using the new curricula.
- Periodic evaluation of new methodologies (classroom follow-up).
- Generalization of the new programs for CI, CP and CE1 (Grades 1, 2 and 3).
- Grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (CI, CP, CE1, CE2 and CM1) curricula finalized.
- Teachers' guides (including student assessment guide) for Grades 1 thru 4 (CI, CP, CE1 and CE2) developed, edited, printed and distributed.
- French and Mathematics texts and workbooks developed and produced for CI and CP as well as guides and pedagogical charts.
- Mathematics and French textbooks for third and fourth grade (CE1 and CE2) developed, edited and printed.
- Textbooks, teachers' guides and workbooks, for the first time, locally developed, produced and tested.

Training:

- 21,500 CI/CP teachers and directors trained in the new programs.
- An overall training plan (pre-service and in-service) designed and tested : *Cadre de gestion des activités de formation du personnel enseignant du primaire 2000 – 2005 (décembre 2000)*.

- 100 school inspectors trained and involved in all activities related to the primary-level education reform.
- Training modules developed for Grade 1 in new curricula and new pedagogical approaches: *Guide du formateur (1999)* ; *Guide de l'apprenant (1999)*.
- Training modules developed for Grade 2 in new curriculum and new pedagogical approaches: *Guide du formateur, guide de l'apprenant (C1), guide de l'apprenant (CP), guide de l'apprenant (directeurs) (2000)*.
- Training modules for Grade 3 developed.
- Distance learning program for 100 school directors developed and tested.
- Renovation of the Natitingou Teacher Training College (ENI) and reorganization of the teacher training program of both ENIs at Natitingou (élèves – instituteurs adjoints) and Parakou (élèves – instituteurs).
- 9,000 CP/CE teachers and directors trained in the new programs.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Monitoring and evaluation system for new curriculum implementation developed: *Orientations en évaluation de programmes (2001)*.
- Distance learning for 100 school directors evaluated and recommendations formulated.
- ENI program evaluated and improved with curricula available: *Rapport de l'atelier d'évaluation*.
- New curriculum leaving exam (CEP) evaluated for school years 1998, 1999, and 2000 and recommendations formulated.
- Classroom research on student performance carried out : *Évaluation des apprentissages en salle de classe à l'enseignement primaire : Résultats d'une étude de terrain (janvier – mai 2001)*.
- Student assessment analysis completed : *Évaluation des apprentissages à l'enseignement primaire (2 documents) (mai – juin 2001)*.
- Strategies recommended to implement an improved student assessment program : *Document d'orientation en évaluation au primaire (2001)*
- Reference guide for new curricula finalized : *Les nouveaux programmes d'études de l'enseignement primaire, fondements, approches et stratégies (1999); Acquérir à*

l'école des compétences utiles pour la vie : Fondements et orientations des nouveaux programmes d' études de l'enseignement primaire (mai 2001).

- Professional competencies guide for stakeholders and teachers designed, validated and in use : *Les compétences professionnelles à caractère pédagogique liés à la réforme du système éducatif (2001).*

2.4.2 CLIN 2 : Girls' Education

Beginnings

Girls' Education, an extended area of emphasis within the CLEF project's pedagogical efforts, is a major feature of the project. With the overall objective of *broadening access for girls and children in disadvantaged regions*, the Girls' Education team were pace-setters. Starting in mid October 2000, two months into the final year of the CLEF II contract, the team completed all of the remaining activities required of them (14 out of 18), in order to meet their contractual objectives. This translates into the girls' education team completing three years worth of milestones over a ten-month period. Four activities had been completed by the former Management Information Systems (MIS) Specialist/Girls' Education Technical Advisor and her staff prior to the arrival of the present team. Ms. Francine Agueh's work resulted in a National Girls' Education Network (Réseau national pour la promotion de la scolarisation des filles), which arose out of an action plan on equity and access during CLEF I.

Objectives

In order to realize the team's overall objective of *increasing equity for girls and children in disadvantaged areas*, specific objectives or *milestones*, had to be met. These included the following:

1. Develop and implement strategies to promote girls' education and classroom equity.
2. Finance grassroots intervention for girls' schooling.

3. Create a functional national network to promote girls' schooling.
4. Develop system to monitor equity for target group.

In answer to the above, the Girls' Education team vigorously embarked upon the numerous activities required to accomplish their milestones. Their first order of business involved the Réseau.

A National Girls' Network : Réseau national pour la promotion de la scolarisation des filles

The Réseau or *Network*, the driving force behind the girls' education program, needed to become autonomous and functional by the end of year three of the project. In its initial stages the Network was composed of representatives from various categories of stakeholders such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's), Parents Associations, Government etc. However, in May 1999, the Administrative Council of the Network decided that its structure should change. Any international organization promoting girls' education could be allowed access to its membership. In April 1999, a two-year program was developed describing activities to be performed by the Network including a timetable and a budget.

In June, November and December 2000, the Network signed contracts with three local grassroots organizations promoting girls' education. Each contract focused on a different aspect of girls' education in different sub-prefectures of Benin. The Network's office was secured, furniture and equipment ordered in November 1999, and in January 2001, staff were hired. Personnel began work on February 1, 2001 and the Network's official inauguration was held on February 9, 2001 in the presence of a host of dignitaries. With a new budget and an up-dated action plan the Network became autonomous and operational.

Grassroots Activities

After the financing of the three grassroots organizations : *Amities Ensoleillées (OAE)* – June 23, 2000; *Mutuelle de Jeunes Chrétiens pour le Développement (MJCD)* – November 2000; and, *Jeunesse Sans Frontières (JSF)* – December 2000, the girls' education team, in collaboration with the Network, conducted several follow-up visits for the monitoring of organizational activities. At the close of these visits reports were developed and submitted.

As previously mentioned, each local contract focused on a different aspect of girls' education activities in different sub-prefectures of Benin. OAE, for instance, implemented girls' education activities within the So-Ava sub-prefecture while JSF focused on the sub-prefecture of Torri-Bossito and MJCD on the sub-prefectures of Toffo, Lokossa, Dogbo and Sakété. Activities by the NGO's included sensitizing parents and village leaders to the importance of sending girls to school; establishing village communities to monitor girls' progress at school; developing income-generating activities for parents of school-age children; and working with parents of student associations.

Monitoring and Evaluation System for Girls' Education

Another major milestone for the girls' education team was the development of a functioning Monitoring and Evaluation system. The monitoring and evaluation system's primary task was to measure the impact of girls' education interventions on girls' primary school enrollment, retention, and promotion rates. It provided a series of quantitative and qualitative measures of parent and stakeholder attitudes towards girls' education; teacher-to-student classroom dynamics; and interventions-to-outcomes matrices. The system was

developed and field-tested in August 2000 as a pilot study. The survey instruments were refined during a second field test conducted in March 2001.

The March 2001, monitoring and evaluation exercise had a dual purpose: to gather and assess data concerning the effectiveness of girls' education activities, current to that date, in the targeted sub-prefectures, and to demonstrate that the monitoring and evaluation system was indeed operational. The fieldwork exercises were conducted in the same six sub-prefectures that had been visited for the August 2000 study, but with more refined survey instruments. As a result, the monitoring and evaluation system was deemed to be effectively operational. The results of the fieldwork highlighted several areas that require further attention within the context of girls' education efforts in Benin. Among these areas are:

1. The reinforcement of the capabilities of the sub-prefecture committees;
2. More rigor in the collection and reporting of data at the school level;
3. The severe lack of qualified teachers hampering enrollment and retention; and,
4. The success of girls' education interventions as demonstrated by massive enrollments at the CI level in the 2000-2001 school year presenting retention challenges.

Equity in the Classroom (EIC) Program

The Equity in the Classroom (EIC) Program is a training workshop for teacher trainers, teacher supervisors, curriculum developers and education policy makers, designed to enhance skills that improve equity in the primary classroom for girls and other traditionally underserved students. The EIC workshop provides participants with a set of tools to support teacher-conducted classroom research and a variety of strategies to improve teacher practices.

The EIC Program began in Benin, in August 1998, with two five-day workshops, one in the southern region at Lokossa (August 10-14, 1998), and the second in the northern region at Parakou (August 17-21, 1998). Each workshop was held in a teacher training institution that had been revitalized under CLEF II. The workshops centered around various themes that would promote girls' education and gender equity. These themes were then explored using classroom teaching methods that were effective in increasing girls' participation such as reflective journal writing, cooperative learning and interviewing and problem solving. Also involved was a daily *reflection on teaching exercise*, where participants were asked to assess the impact of the workshop teaching strategies on their own learning and planned application of the new methodologies in their own work as teacher trainers and supervisors. Participants also practiced using classroom observation instruments and case studies of children as techniques to gather information about classroom teaching practices that impact participation. They wrote action plans to conduct classroom observations in designated departments and to collect case studies. In addition, they adapted several training activities to use in their own work for a six-month period. At the end of the six months, participants were expected to write a report summarizing the impact of the action plan and submit it to a designated person. These activities constituted Phase I of the EIC program.

EIC- Benin was organized so that participants would receive an initial round of training in August 1998 and follow-up training one year later; however, this follow-up training was not able to occur until December 1999. The workshops were held in Bohicon and Parakou on December 13-14 and 17-18, 1999, respectively. They constituted the final phase of EIC activities planned for Benin.

During the first round of training in August 1998, participants focused on strategies to increase girls' enrollment in primary school. Consequently, discussions centered around the school and community factors that advanced or impeded girls' participation in school. During the follow-up, however, emphasis was placed on retention of girls' in school. During the initial as well as the follow-up trainings, EIC participants received a set of tools that could be used to continue the classroom-based action research that had been begun during the workshops. In addition, each participant was provided with a copy of the complete EIC training manual and all supporting reference materials and handouts, so that the workshop could be easily adapted and replicated on the local or departmental level for teacher and school director training. EIC trained 56 participants in its initial phase and 60 during its follow-up phase.

In May 2001, a study was completed that assessed the appropriate dissemination of the EIC training. It provided verification that specific behavioral changes had taken place due to the EIC training and that the EIC workshop participants were training others in the new methodologies.

Other Activities

Those activities that constituted completion of milestones were not the only ones the girls' education team were involved in. Numerous other *related* activities were also undertaken, for example, an *Academic Recognition Program*.

In collaboration with the MOE, USAID, and the Network, prizes were distributed, in each of the three years of CLEF, to the five girls with the highest scholastic average in

each of the Network's 13 sub-prefectures. A total of over 180 girls have been honored for their hard work and continuing efforts in school.

The girls' education team also helped the Network develop strategies for fundraising and a fundraising action plan that, if successful, would help the Network secure the necessary funding to continue to expand its efforts. In addition, the team was involved in a study to establish possibilities of establishing mentorship programs for girls' in the Network's 13 sub-prefectures. The team also developed a set of strategies to mobilize mothers in the 13 sub-prefectures, in support of educating girls, and defined actions that would increase the national visibility of the Network. In April 2001, the team members traveled to Ghana, in order to exchange ideas on girls' education in that country.

List of Accomplishments

The girls' education team was able to accomplish a great deal in a relatively short period. Their accomplishments are as follows:

Girls Education Network Set-up:

- A National Girls' Education Network (*Réseau national pour la promotion de la scolarisation de filles*) established (1997); rules and regulations adopted (1999); and, new structures put in place (2000). The Network is now fully operational and decentralized in 13 sub-prefectures having the lowest enrollment of girls.
- The majority of the action plan of the Network implemented.
- Collaboration with the Network for the development of Network logo.

Equity in the Classroom:

- Strategies developed and implemented for the promotion of girls' education and classroom equity.

- Equity in the Classroom (EIC) Program: Training workshops for teachers, teacher supervisors, curriculum developers, and education policy-makers designed to enhance skills that improve equity conducted and evaluated.
- Integration of Equity in the Classroom Project teacher training and supervision nationwide improved.

Financing of Grassroots Organizations and Training:

- The financing of three grassroot organizations for the implementation of activities that support the commitment to increase the rate of female enrollment.
- Grassroots activities implemented, monitored, evaluated and reported.
- The financing of training for NGO's involved in girls' education.

Fundraising and Awareness Raising Activities:

- *L'école, un droit pour elle aussi ! (2000)*, School, a Right for Her Also!: A twenty-minute video on girls' education used for community involvement and fundraising.
- Financing of the Girls' Academic Recognition Program – Since the 1997-1998 school year, distribution of prizes in each of the 13 sub-prefectures to the five best primary school girls passing to a higher class.
- Strategic document and action plan for Network fundraising activities.
- Strategic document and action plan for the Mobilization of Mothers in support of educating girls in the 13 sub-prefectures.

The Monitoring and Evaluation System for girls' education that was developed to measure the impact of girls' education interventions on girls' enrollment, retention, and promotion rates indicated a 16.65% increase in girls' gross enrollment rate since 1995.

2.4.3 CLIN 3 : Financial Management

Past Constraints

Many of the major issues constraining past efforts to improve the primary education system reflect an apparent lack of effective management skills at the central and regional levels of the Government of Benin. This is one of the factors in the regional and district

inequities in the distribution of educational resources, low absorptive capacity, lack of coherent policies and planning to meet and overcome system problems.

TMG's approach was to work with the officials in the Finance Department of the MEPS to help assess areas of institutional or skill weakness, identify possible reasons for reluctance to delegate authority, and develop systematic programs to correct them.

Objective

With the overall objective of ensuring that there were *adequate financial resources available for rehabilitation and maintenance of [Benin's] education system*, TMG's Financial Management team's primary concern was the specific objective or *milestone* of developing, in partnership with the MEPS, planning and financial management tools and to train *regional and central officials in financial management* and in the use of the tools developed. The CLEF II Financial Management team focused on intensive training via a *hands-on/ how-to* approach. Highlights among their numerous accomplishments include: the development of a financial management procedures manual; development of an Education Economic Account; and, performance of a financial management study on the impact of decentralization laws on the financial management system in primary education.

Financial Management Procedures Manual: *Manuel des procedures financiers* (October 2000)

Manuel des procedures financiers (Oct. 2000), a financial management procedures manual, was developed with the specific objective of harmonizing the financial procedures at both the central and the regional levels; assuring the regularity of the

financial operations of the MEPS; improving efficiency so that the MEPS' objectives could be realized; and, raising the reliability of financial information produced by MEPS' branches. As part of the new expenditure tracking system, the manual provided a step-by-step guide on procedures to be followed by financial managers. Thirteen financial management trainers from the MEPS were trained in the use of the new procedures manual. The objective of the activity was to prepare the trainees to subsequently carry out similar type training at the regional levels; therefore, special attention was given to the pedagogical skills needed to introduce appropriately the use of the new manual. The trainees were not only exposed to the theoretical aspects of the expenditure tracking system but also received hands-on experience on the Ministry of Finance (MOF) computerized financial budget system. This exposure gave the trainees first-hand experience on how the MOF handles the budget of the MEPS. At a later date, the new financial management procedures were evaluated, recommendations were formulated, and an audit of verification conducted to ascertain that the new procedures were actually being used.

An Education Economic Account : *Compte économique général de l'éducation : principes et méthodes (March 1999)*

As previously stated, lack of effective management skills at the central and regional levels was one of the factors in the regional and district inequities in the distribution of educational resources, low absorptive capacity, and lack of coherent policies and planning to meet and overcome system problems. The development of an Education Economic Account at the MEPS helped to combat this particular constraint. In addition to intensive training conducted by the financial management team to impart the necessary management skills needed for MEPS' employees, the Education Economic Account

yielded a comparative analysis of per student expenditures reflecting regional differences since 1993. The MEPS is now able to monitor regional and district inequities in order to rectify them.

Study on the Impact of Decentralization Laws on the Financial Management System in Education : *Etude sur l'impact des lois de la d centralisation sur le syst me d'enseignement primaire et maternel du B nin (July 2000)*

Concurrent with a study of a human resource decentralization, the financial management team conducted its own study: *Etude sur l'impact des lois de la d centralisation sur le syst me d'enseignement primaire et maternel du B nin (July 2000)*. The study reported on the probable impact of the decentralization laws on the financial management system in education. Its recommendations included advice to Benin's government, schools, communes or mini-districts, and as parent-teacher organizations.

For Benin's schools, it suggested that long-term goals be initiated so that the schools could become self-sufficient and able to generate some of their own funding. To the communes, it suggested that poverty could be reduced and the standard of living raised if investors were attracted to their area. If investors were to come, it would allow each commune to better support the costs involved in sending their children to school as well as the creation of possible donors for the support of local school projects. Parent-teacher associations were encouraged to collaborate more closely with the school system in order to be more involved in the decision-making processes. Lastly, the Government was encouraged to simplify its financial procedures and justification of funds process from its external and internal partners; to create a financial tracking system for its partners in the present six Departments; and, to create documents that could be used at every operational level of the MEPS.

List of Accomplishments

The accomplishments of the Financial Management team for CLEF II are listed as follows:

Initial Design:

- A budget steering committee created.
- Budget schedules consistent with school year designed.
- Budget procedures evaluated and recommendations formulated: *Evaluation des procédures budgétaires actuelles: version finale (juillet 2001)*
- *Etude sur la gestion financière des ministères sociaux : Rapport définitif (février 2000)*: Case studies, situation specific and on-site assessment completed.

Procedures and Tools:

- *Manuel des procédures financiers (October 2000)*: a procedures manual in financial management developed for the MEPS.
- Letter concerning the use of the new procedures signed by the MEPS prepared.
- New financial management procedures evaluated and recommendations formulated: *Evaluation des procédures de gestion financière: version finale (juillet 2001)*
- Audit verification that the new procedures are being used: *Attestation (28 juin 2001)*
- Computer applications for budget control at the central and decentralized levels of the MEPS established and operationalized.

Training Plans:

- Financial Management training plan designed: *Plan d'action pour la formation des cadres financiers du MENRS 1999-2001 (juin 1999)*
- Financial Management training plan evaluated and revised: *Evaluation du deuxième plan de formation administrative et financière du ministère de l'éducation nationale et de la recherche scientifique (1^{er} juin 2001)* and *Deuxième plan de formation administrative et financière: version révisée (1^{er} juin 2001)*
- Three-year (1999 – 2001) action plan for the training of financial managers at the regional level for 2001 : *Plan de formation en comptabilité et gestion financière des agents et cadres de structures d'□concentrées (DDE, CS) pour l'année 2001 (Nov. 2000)* developed.

- System for monitoring annual training plan developed : *Système de suivi du plan de formation administrative et financière* (vols. 1 & 2) (avril 2001).

Training Implementation:

- Training of thirteen financial management trainers in the use of the procedures manual : *Atelier des formation des formateurs à l'utilisation du manuel des procédures financiers du MENRS du 12 au 17 février 2001* (Février 2001).
- Training, in-country and outside of Benin, for capacity building in Financial and Administrative Management for several hundred MEPS' staff carried out.
- Training of 57 financial managers (49 from MEPS and 8 from NGOs) in the new accounting system for West Africa (SYSCOA) completed.
- Introduction and retraining of 185 MEPS employees in the usage of computer software.
- Introduction to the basic use of ACCESS software to 12 MEPS regional employees. employees in the usage of computer software.
- Introduction to the basic use of ACCESS software to 12 MEPS regional employees.
- 382 MOE employees trained in the Finance and Human Resource Manuals.
- Financial management training for NGO's involved in Girls' Education after addressing their capacity to manage and account for funds conducted.

Studies:

- *Compte économique général de l'éducation: principes et méthodes* (March 1999) : An Education Economic Account at the MEPS that yields a comparative analysis of per student expenditures reflecting regional differences since 1993, developed and established.
- *Cadrage de l'éducation nationale au Bénin : en vue de l'application d'un modèle de simulation* (Jan. 2000) : A financial simulation model : a planning tool for forecasting trends on which managers can base their decisions created.
- *Etude sur l' impact des lois de la décentralisation sur le système d'enseignement primaire et maternel du Bénin* (July 2000) : a Financial Management Study on the impact of the decentralization laws on the financial management system in education produced.

2.4.4 CLIN 4 : Educational Planning

Overview

In CLEF I, the Educational Planning team established Fundamental Quality Level (FQL) norms (standards on which a quality education is based), criteria, and indicators for all aspects of Benin's primary school system. That work included an initial FQL strategy, definition, evaluation of the attending of the FQL norms and plans of implementation.

CLEF II

With the overall objectives of *greater participation promoted through participatory decision-making and consensus building and strengthening MEPS' capacity to design, implement and coordinate national education objectives*, the Educational Planning team expanded on the work that it started in CLEF I. The specific objectives or *milestones* in support of the team's overall objectives were :

1. Develop strategies to enhance public and private participation.
2. Develop strategies to decentralize procedures of regional and local administrative units.

Fundamental Quality Level (FQL) Norms and School Management Study

For FQL, the team conducted an additional evaluation of the FQL norms, an evaluation of the first FQL definition and a conception and an elaboration of a second FQL definition. In addition, to help the MEPS better facilitate school management, a study on school management was completed that included specific strategies and recommendations for the efficient management of Benin's primary schools. These strategies and recommendations were formally presented to the MEPS in June 2001.

National Textbook Policy and Decentralization Study

In collaboration with the MEPS, the Educational Planning team developed a national textbook policy and also conducted a Decentralization Study: *Étude sur la décentralisation du système éducatif au Bénin (July 2000)*. The decentralization study researched the impact of decentralization on Benin's educational system and its human and financial management personnel resources. Its objectives were: to promote a greater and sustained stakeholders' participation in the primary education reform; to identify and/or reinforce related MEPS decentralization initiatives; and to support the effective implementation of these initiatives. This study was the central focus of a national forum (*Actes du Forum*) held May 16-18, 2001 on the issue of decentralization in Benin. It offered recommendations for MEPS' administrative and financial management deconcentration.

Education Management Information System (EMIS)

The Educational Planning team and the Management Information System's (MIS) technician had been involved with assisting the MEPS in the analysis of its primary education statistical data since the 1997-98 school year. In CLEF II the team expanded its efforts by training 15 MEPS staff in the development of specialized computer applications that enabled the MEPS to better manage its statistical data. In addition, the team developed and implemented computer applications for statistical data analysis of schools at the central and decentralized levels. It also 35 MEPS personnel in its usage, thus creating a completely operational Education Management Information System (EMIS) based on graphic interface.

All of these activities resulted in the accomplishment of the Planning team's overall contractual objectives: Greater participation promoted through participatory decision-making and consensus building on education; and, institutional capacity strengthened to enable the MEPS to design, implement and coordinate the GOB's national education objectives.

List of Accomplishments

The accomplishments of the Educational Planning team, during CLEF II, are as follows:

FQLs:

- Evaluation of the first FQL definition : *Evaluation de la première définition de l'école de qualité fondamentale (mai 2000).*
- Conception and elaboration of a second FQL definition : *Ecole de qualité fondamentale (EQF) projet de deuxième définition (février 2001).*

Studies:

- A comprehensive human resource study on the impact of decentralization on the educational system in Benin: *Étude sur la décentralisation du système éducatif au Bénin (vols. 1-3) (juillet 2000).*
- Participation in a National Forum on Decentralization : *Actes du Forum (May 16-18, 2001).*
- Assist the Ministry of Education develop decrees and other relevant documents to implement recommendations of the National Forum on Decentralization: *Rapport sur l'activité relative à la rédaction d'un projet de décrets d'application des lois de décentralisation du système éducatif du Bénin (Juillet 2001)* and *Rapport sur l'activité relative à la rédaction d'un projet de décrets d'application des lois de la décentralisation au système éducatif du Bénin (Juillet 2001).*
- A Primary School Management Study : *Étude sur la gestion des écoles primaires publiques dans un contexte de décentralisation : Rapport final/Document Principal (3 documents) (février 2001).*
- Strategies and recommendations from School Management Study formally presented to the MEPS for adoption: *Etude sur la gestion des écoles primaires publiques dans*

un contexte de d centralisation : Atelier de restitution des resultats de l' tude et d' laboration des strat gies de mise en  uvre des recommandations : Rapport de l'atelier (Juillet 2001) and Etude sur la gestion des  coles primaires publiques dans un contexte de d centralisation : Rapport final : Recommandations revis es, adopt es et strat gies de mise en  uvre (juillet 2001).

Computer Application Design and Training:

- Training of 15 MEPS personnel in computer software design.
- Creation of an EMIS based on graphic interface that permits the decentralization of statistics to the regional office/DDE levels : *EMIS application (4 diskettes) ; Saisie et  dition des statistiques de l'enseignement primaire : Manuel de l'utilisateur (f vrier 2001) ; Atelier de formation des cadres du SSGI et de SOSP/DDE sur l'application de gestion des statistiques de l'enseignement primaire : WINSTAT 2 Rapport de formation (f vrier 2001).*
- Training of 35 MEPS personnel in the usage of *WINSTAT 2*.

School Statistics:

- Development of tools for data collection for school mapping.
- Assistance to the MEPS to produce statistical data for school years: 98-99, 99-2000, 2000-2001.

2.5 Issues and Lessons Learned

As a result of CLEF II, the CLEF team has learned or has developed concerns about the following :

- The Learning and Instruction (Pedagogy) team believes that, even though major changes have been made, technical assistance will continue to be needed to complete the process of school reform in Benin.
- The Girls' Education team learned that local Beninois consultants were on par with American or third-country international consultants. They also learned that, when

forming local committees for various project activities, allowing the participants to do the actual work themselves (finding funding sources etc.) gives them a sense of ownership of the activity.

- The Financial Management team has done intensive training throughout the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, but due to Benin's recent national elections, there is a major rotation in staff. This may present a constraint to the reinforcement of the institutional framework within the MEPS. The skills learned hopefully will be useful wherever the trainees go; however, the MEPS will suffer from their loss.

2.6 Best Practices

To those implementing similar projects in education, the CLEF team can share some of their best practices from CLEF II.

- An experimental phase is paramount for the testing of *all* materials produced for schools.
- School site visits make a difference in follow-up.
- It is necessary that all activities related to the process of primary education reform work in synergy.
- The more stakeholders are informed about decision-making related to the reform, the more efficient the results obtained.
- It is important to involve host-country nationals in the process of curriculum development as well as textbook and teacher guide design.
- Teacher training at the school site is more efficient than at the national level.
- Practical training yields better results.
- Decentralization should take into account cultural norms or mores.
- A national school map is an essential element in all aspects of school reform.
- Follow-up sessions for training seminars or workshops such as Equity in the Classroom are critical to reinforce behavior change.

3.0 Conclusions

One could ask the question, *what does all this mean to the average Beninese?* Prior to the CLEF project, the educational system of Benin maintained its colonial inheritance. It could not provide students with the kind of education most of them required to succeed economically. Historically noted for having a large number of intellectuals (most living outside of Benin), Benin still had one of highest illiteracy rates in the world (between 70% and 80%). Its school system was simply a bastion for university degree seekers. Basic literacy could not be provided and over 40% of its children never enrolled in school. Of the remaining that did enroll, less than 23% were girls, thus dooming their lives to ones of poverty and servitude. With high dropout, repetition, and failure rates, coupled with demoralized and under-qualified teachers, the system was in complete disarray. At the close of the CLEF project, Benin's primary education system has been completely re-vamped and there is much hope for continuing achievements.

4.0 Acronymns

ACRONYMNS

AED	Academy for Educational Development
BET	Basic Education Team
CAII	Creative Associates International, Inc.
CI	Grade 1 of primary education
CP	Grade 2 of primary education
CE1	Grade 3 of primary education
CE2	Grade 4 of primary education
CMI	Grade 5 of primary education
CEP	Primary School Leaving Exam
CLEF	Children's Learning and Equity Foundations Project
CLINS	Contract line item numbers
CS	School district
DDE	Regional Directorate of Education
EIC	Equity in the Classroom
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ENI	Teacher Training College
FQL	Fundamental Quality Level
GOB	Government of Benin
JSF	Jeunesse Sans Frontières
MEPS	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
MIS	Management Information System
MJCD	Mutuelle de Jeunes Chrétiens pour le Développement
MOF	Ministry of Finance
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
OAE	Amities Ensoleillées

PAAD	Program Assistance Authorization Document
RANV	Réponse active non-verbal (Language in Action)
SYSCOA	West Africa accounting system (Système Compatable Ouest Africain)
TMG	The Mitchell Group, Inc.
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

5.0 ANNEXES

REVISED PERFORMANCE MILESTONE PLAN

RESULTS PACKAGES/MILESTONES	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Means of Verification
CLIN 1 (Results Packages 1 & 2) Improve quality, effectiveness of primary schools	11.66%	11.67%	11.67%	35%
<u>Milestones</u> 1) New curriculums in use nationwide, including textbooks, training materials and programs, and an effective leaving exam.	1.1 New curriculum generalized for first grade and all teachers trained. 1.2 New curriculum in process of generalization for second year and teachers being trained.	1.1 Second and third grade curricula finalized 1.2 Teachers' guides (including student assessment guide) for the second grade developed, edited, printed and distributed. 1.3 Mathematics and French textbooks, workbooks and pedagogical charts for the second grade developed, edited and printed.	1.1 Fourth and fifth grade curricula finalized 1.2 Teachers' guides (including student assessment guide) for third grade developed, edited, printed and distributed. 1.3 Teachers' guides (including student assessment guide) for fourth grade developed and edited. 1.4 Mathematics and French textbooks for third grade developed, edited and printed. 1.5 Monitoring and evaluation system for new curriculum implementation developed. 1.6 New curriculum leaving exam (CEP/2000) evaluated. 1.7 Fourth grade textbooks for Mathematics and French developed edited 1.8 Reference guide for new curriculum finalized.	Curricula Teachers' guides Teachers' guides Textbooks and workbooks Systems description document Reports of CEP effectiveness and relevance Manuscripts Reference guide
2) Recommend strategies to implement national student assessment program	2.1 Classroom research on student performance carried out.	2.1 Student assessment analysis completed.	2.1 Recommend strategies to implement an improved student assessment program.	Monitoring report for improved quarterly assessments cost-effectiveness and consistency of implementation.
3) Cost-effective, sustainable pre- and in-service training system in place and functioning.	3.1 Renovate one ENI 3.2 Train 3,000 teachers in-service in use of new curriculum and pedagogical approaches, based on experience acquired in training the contractual teachers during phase one. 3.3 Design and experiment an overall training plan (pre-service and in-service) 3.4 Train 150 inspectors to supervise the generalization of new curriculum.	3.1 Training modules developed for second grade in new curriculum and new pedagogical approaches. 3.2 Distance learning program for 100 school directors developed and tested. 3.3 ENI training program evaluated.	3.1 Training modules for third grade developed. 3.2 Distance learning for 100 school directors evaluated and recommendations formulated. 3.3 ENI training program improved.	Training Modules Evaluation Evaluation

RESULTS PACKAGES/MILESTONES	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Means of Verification
<p>CLIN 2 (Results Packages 3&4) Increased equity for girls and children in disadvantaged regions.</p> <p><u>Milestones</u> 1) Develop and implement strategies to promote girls' education and classroom equity.</p> <p>2) Finance grassroots intervention for girls' schooling.</p> <p>3) A functional national network to promote girls' schooling created.</p> <p>4) Develop system to monitor equity for target group.</p>	<p>10.00%</p> <p>1.1 Revise the new curriculum and the new approaches to reflect greater gender sensitivity.</p>	<p>10.00%</p> <p>1.1 Girls' education innovations inventory edited and produced.</p> <p>1.2 Monitoring and evaluation system for girls' education fully developed and tested.</p> <p>2.1 A minimum of three grassroots activities financed and monitored.</p> <p>3.1 General Assembly held, officers' elected and legal status obtained.</p> <p>3.2 Girls' education network personnel hired and office established.</p> <p>4.1 Training organized for inspectors and school directors from targeted areas in strategies to promote classroom equity.</p> <p>4.2 Evaluate integration of EIC into teacher training and supervision programs nationwide.</p>	<p>10.00%</p> <p>2.1 Grassroots activities implemented and monitored.</p> <p>2.2 Grassroots activities evaluated and report produced.</p> <p>3.1 Network implements the majority of its action plan.</p> <p>4.1 Monitoring and evaluation system for girls' educational operational.</p> <p>4.2 Pilot study of changes in teacher practice concluded and report produced.</p> <p>4.3 Integration of EIC into teacher training and supervision programs nationwide improved.</p>	<p>30%</p> <p>Site visit reports from TMG, or network and quarterly reports from recipients. EMIS monitoring data</p> <p>National network committee verifies action at sub-prefecture level.</p> <p>Network annual report.</p> <p>Training report</p>

RESULTS PACKAGES/MILESTONES	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Means of Verification
<p>CLIN 3 (Results Package 5) Adequate financial resources available for rehabilitation and maintenance of education system.</p> <p><u>Milestone</u> 1. Train regional, central officials in financial management.</p>	<p>6.66%</p> <p>1.1 Budget steering committee set up. 1.2 Budget schedules consistent with school year designed. 1.3 Case studies, situation specific and on-site assessment completed. 1.4 Financial training plan designed. 1.5 TOT completed on- the – job training. 1.6 Write a procedures manual for the central and decentralized level. 1.7 Prepare a letter concerning the use of the new procedures that the MOE will sign.</p>	<p>6.67%</p> <p>1.1 Appropriate financial management and planning tools developed (simulation model, budget expenditure tracking system, Education Economic Account, Private School Study) 1.2 Annual decentralization training plan developed (DDE,CS). 1.3 Training of 10 financial management trainers in the use of the procedures manual. 1.4 System for monitoring annual training plan developed</p>	<p>6.67%</p> <p>1.1 New financial management procedures evaluated and recommendation formulated. 1.2 Financial management training plan evaluated and revised. 1.3 Hire an external auditor to verify that the procedures are being used. 1.4 Budget procedures evaluated and recommendations formulated.</p>	<p>20%</p> <p>Simulation model Education Economic Account Private School Study Updates Procedures manual Training manuals and materials Training Evaluations Budget procedures manual</p>

RESULTS PACKAGES/ MILESTONES	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Means of Verification
<p>CLIN 4 (Results Package 6&7)</p> <p>Greater participation promoted through participatory decision making and consensus building.</p> <p><u>Milestone</u></p> <p>1) Develop strategies to enhance public and private participation.</p> <p>MOE's capacity to design, implement and coordinate national education objectives strengthened.</p> <p><u>Milestone</u></p> <p>2) Develop strategies to decentralize procedures of regional and local administrative units.</p>	<p>5.00%</p> <p>1.1 Work to implicate APE members in school inventory control and textbook distribution.</p> <p>2.1 Decentralization planning, decision-making and personnel management procedures finalized</p>	<p>5.00%</p> <p>1.1 Evaluation of FQL first definition</p> <p>1.2 Conception and evaluation of second FQL definition.</p> <p>1.3 Study of school management, including APE involvement, carried out.</p> <p>2.1 Recommendation developed for MOE administrative and financial management deconcentration.</p> <p>2.2 EMIS data management system based on graphic interface decentralized to all 6 DDEs.</p>	<p>5.00%</p> <p>1.1 Strategies and recommendations from the study of school management, including APE involvement, developed in collaboration with World Education and various MENRS divisions and presented to the MOE for adoption.</p> <p>2.1 Assit the Ministry of Education to develop decrees and pther relevant documents to implement recommendations of the National Forum on Decentralization.</p>	<p>15%</p> <p>Strategies document adopted by MENRS</p> <p>School data available in DDEs.</p> <p>Decentralization report EMIS system operational</p>

**ALLOCUTION DE MME CARRIE DAILEY,
DIRECTEUR DE MISSION PAR INTERIM**

Cérémonie de clôture du Projet CLEF

Porto-Novo le Vendredi 2 Novembre 2001 à 16 h 45

- Excellence Monsieur le Ministre ;
- Monsieur le Directeur de Cabinet du Ministre des Enseignements Primaire et Secondaire ;
- Messieurs les membres du Cabinet du Ministre des Enseignements Primaire et Secondaire ;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les acteurs dans le domaine de l'Education au Bénin ;
- Mesdames et Messieurs ;

C'est avec un réel plaisir que je prends part, ce jour Vendredi 2 novembre 2001, à la cérémonie qui proclame officiellement la fin des activités du projet CLEF au Bénin. Réel plaisir dis-je, car au cours des trois dernières années, ce projet a marqué de son empreinte l'assistance technique apportée au Ministère des Enseignements Primaire et Secondaire, dans la mise en œuvre du Programme de Réforme de l'Enseignement Primaire. Permettez que je rappelle ici quelques-uns des résultats concrets majeurs obtenus par le projet et le personnel de TMG, en collaboration avec tous les acteurs de l'éducation au niveau national :

- la révision des programmes d'études des classes de CI, CP, CE₁ et CE₂ ;
- la production de manuels scolaires, notamment les cahiers d'activités de Français et de Mathématique, de guides pédagogiques, de planches pédagogiques pour les classes de CI, CP, CE₁ et CE₂ ;

- la formation des enseignants du CI, CP et CE₁ ;
- l'élaboration des outils d'évaluation des apprentissages ;
- la mise en place du réseau National pour la Promotion de la Scolarisation des Filles ;
- l'amélioration de la gestion financière ;
- le renforcement de la capacité institutionnelle, etc.

Excellence Monsieur le ministre,

Mesdames et messieurs,

Au nom du Directeur de l'USAID que j'ai l'honneur de représenter, au nom de tout le personnel de l'USAID, je voudrais publiquement rendre hommage à toute l'équipe de TMG à Washington comme à Porto-Novo pour leur dévouement à la tâche, leur engagement pour réussir la mission qui leur a été confiée. Je les félicite et avec eux tous les consultants tant nationaux qu'internationaux, et vous tous ici présents qui avez travaillé avec eux de jour comme de nuit pour assurer que « Plus d'enfants Béninois reçoivent, sur une base équitable, une éducation de qualité ».

Le Projet CLEF finit, mais la Réforme ne s'arrête pas.

Excellence Monsieur le Ministre, c'est le lieu de réitérer la volonté du Gouvernement des Etats-Unis à travers l'USAID, de continuer à soutenir les efforts du Gouvernement du Bénin dans la réforme en cours de son système éducatif. Je puis vous assurer qu'à l'heure actuelle, à l'USAID nous travaillons d'arrache-pied pour le recrutement du prochain contrat institutionnel. Le projet qui prendra la relève du CLEF s'appellera EQUIPE.

Nous espérons que tout ce qui a été accompli à ce jour, que ce soit les résultats concrets obtenus, les compétences développées, les capacités renforcées et

même les difficultés rencontrées ainsi que les solutions apportées contribueront à assurer et garantir la durabilité de la réforme.

J'ai également le plaisir de vous annoncer officiellement, que pour compter de ce jour, un véhicule 4 x 4 Toyota Landcruiser du projet CLEF est transféré à la Coordination du Programme GLOBE pour lui permettre de mieux suivre la mise en œuvre de ce Programme sur le terrain.

Vive la coopération Bénino-américaine.

Vive la Réforme de l'Enseignement Primaire.

Je vous remercie.

**ALLOCUTION DU MINISTRE DES ENSEIGNEMENTS PRIMAIRE
ET SECONDAIRE DANS LE CADRE DE LA CLOTURE
DES ACTIVITES DU PROJET CLEF/TMG**

- Monsieur le Directeur de la Mission de l'USAID au Bénin ;
- Monsieur le Directeur de Cabinet du Ministère des Enseignements Primaire et Secondaire ;
- Madame la Directrice au Département Amérique du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et de l'Intégration Africaine ;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Directeurs Centraux ;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les membres du Projet CLEF/TMG ;
- Mesdames et messieurs les membres de la Cellule de Généralisation des Nouveaux Programmes d'Etudes ;
- Chers Invités ;
- Mesdames et Messieurs ;

Qu'il vous souvienne qu'au commencement de la réforme de l'enseignement primaire de 1990 au Bénin étaient les Etats-Unis d'Amérique, agissant par l'intermédiaire de l'Agence des Etats Unis d'Amérique pour le Développement International (USAID).

La nature de l'approche choisit par l'USAID pour son appui au Gouvernement du Bénin est double, à savoir :

- fournir une aide budgétaire directement au Gouvernement pour mener les réformes envisagées dans le cadre du développement des ressources humaines, notamment dans l'enseignement primaire ;

- fournir une assistance technique à court et long terme au ministère en charge de l'éducation nationale pour le soutien de la réforme de l'enseignement primaire.

A cet effet, la République du Bénin et les Etats Unis d'Amérique ont eu à conclure le 30 septembre 1991, deux Accords pour appuyer le programme d'Amélioration du Niveau et de l'Equité de l'Acquis de Connaissances des Enfants, plus connu sous la dénomination de « Programme CLEF », **Children's Learning and Equity Foundations**.

Il y a eu l'Accord de Subvention numéro 680-0206 et l'Accord de Projet numéro 680-0208.

C'est le second Accord que je viens d'énoncer tantôt, qui définit le cadre d'intervention du Projet CLEF. Il s'est agi, à travers ce Projet, de fournir au secteur de l'Education au Bénin une assistance en matière de consultation dans les principaux domaines de concentration de la réforme à partir d'un Contrat à Quantité Indéterminée (CDI) géré par un consortium d'Organisations Non Gouvernementales Américaines.

L'assistance technique était souhaitée pour des activités couvertes par les cinq objectifs suivants :

1. améliorer la qualité de l'éducation et l'apprentissage de l'étudiant par le renforcement ou l'amélioration des points essentiels du système pédagogique ;
2. augmenter l'équité d'accès à l'éducation primaire ;
3. promouvoir la disponibilité de ressources financières adéquates pour réhabiliter et entretenir le système d'éducation au Bénin ;
4. développer une plus grande participation du public dans la prise de décision et la recherche de consensus sur les questions éducatives ;
5. établir une gestion et une planification sectorielles efficaces et efficaces.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Eu égard à ces objectifs stratégiques et après dix années de mise en œuvre du Projet, quels sont les résultats obtenus ?

Comme l'ont déjà indiqué les allocutions précédentes, des performances très satisfaisantes ont été réalisées à différents niveaux. Je voudrais ici souligner quelques résultats patents, à savoir :

- la révision et la réorientation des programmes d'études de tous les cours de l'enseignement primaire ;
- la production et la mise en place d'environ trois millions huit cent mille (3 800 000) cahiers d'activités et de manuels de français et de mathématique pour les trois (03) premières années de l'enseignement primaire ;
- la formation de plus de dix mille (10 000) inspecteurs, directeurs et enseignants des écoles publiques et privées aux nouveaux programmes ;
- la mise en place d'un nouveau système d'évaluation des apprentissages ;
- la progression encourageante du taux brut de scolarisation des filles qui est passé de 35,72 % en 1990 à 68,50% en 2001 ;
- la création, l'installation et le fonctionnement du Réseau National pour la Promotion de la Scolarisation des Filles au Bénin ;
- la formation de plus de cent (100) cadres de l'administration centrale et départementale dans le cadre des plans de formation administrative ;
- la définition des normes Ecole de Qualité Fondamentale (EQF), etc. ;

Je voudrais saisir cette occasion pour féliciter publiquement tous les artisans de cette réussite.

Aussi, a-t-il fallu mobiliser près de 21,5 millions de dollars des Etats-Unis d'Amérique, soit environ 13 milliards de francs CFA pour financer toutes les activités programmées dans le cadre de la réforme.

C'est donc le lieu de remercier très sincèrement au nom du Gouvernement et au nom de toute la communauté scolaire du Bénin, le Gouvernement Américain pour son soutien déterminant.

A travers la coopération américaine, j'adresse ma gratitude à toute la dynamique équipe du projet CLEF/TMG, l'outil opérationnel de l'USAID qui s'est hissé à la hauteur de la mission à lui confiée.

Je ne saurais oublier les valeureux groupes de travail de toutes les composantes de la réforme, à savoir les Pilotes des Plans d'Action, les assistants, les secrétaires, chauffeurs et autres personnels d'appui. Je leur exprime mes sentiments de reconnaissance pour tout ce qu'ils ont fait pour la réussite de la réforme.

Mesdames et messieurs,

Chers invités,

Nous devons cependant reconnaître qu'il reste beaucoup à faire pour atteindre les objectifs quantitatifs et qualitatifs cibles de la réforme. Il s'agira de sauvegarder, de consolider les acquis, de poursuivre les actions entamées et d'engager de nouvelles actions jugées nécessaires. Déjà, l'espoir est porté sur le nouveau Projet EQUIPE attendu avec impatience. A ce propos, je voudrais compter sur la bienveillance diligence du Directeur de l'USAID pour le démarrage prochain de ce projet afin d'éviter toute perturbation dans la programmation de la poursuite du processus de généralisation des nouveaux programmes.

C'est sur cette note d'espoir, que je voudrais terminer mon propos et déclarer officiellement closes ce jour vendredi 2 novembre 2001, les activités d'assistance technique du projet CLEF/TMG.

Vive la Coopération bénino-américaine !

Vive la Réforme de l'Enseignement Primaire !

Vive l'Ecole Béninoise !

Je vous remercie.